STATE OF NEW YORK

1201--B

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 10, 2023

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, ADDABBO, COMRIE, FERNANDEZ, HINCHEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, passed by Senate and delivered to the Assembly, recalled, vote reconsidered, restored to third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading -- recommitted to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to establishing discount programs for veterans

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 66-x to read as follows:

§ 66-x. Utility discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality to establish a discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on utility bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality to customers.

(b) A gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality which offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on the website of such gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality. The availability and amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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accessibility page of the website of such gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality.

2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resident of the state who (i) is the primary named utility service accountholder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

(b) A primary named utility service accountholder shall provide the gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality an authenticated copy of such accountholder's discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

§ 2. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 89-q to read as follows:

§ 89-q. Water discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require waterworks corporations and municipal water systems to establish a discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on water utility bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a waterworks corporation or municipal water system to customers.

(b) A waterworks corporation or municipal water system which offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on the website of such waterworks corporation or municipal water system. The availability and amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the website of such waterworks corporation or municipal water system.

2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resident of the state who (i) is the primary named waterworks or municipal water system service accountholder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

(b) A primary named waterworks or municipal water system service accountholder shall provide the waterworks corporation or municipal water system an authenticated copy of such accountholder's discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

§ 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 91-b to read as follows:

§ 91-b. Telephone discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a telephone corporation to establish a discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on telephone bills. The fiscal impact of such program

shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a telephone corporation to customers.

(b) A telephone corporation which offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation. The availability and amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the website of such telephone corporation.

(c) Participation in the federal government's Lifeline or Affordable Connectivity program, any successor federal program or any successor state program established by the commission that is substantially similar in eligibility and participation criteria to the federal government's affordable connectivity program shall satisfy the telephone corporation's or cable television company's obligation to establish a discount program under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, unless the commission deems it insufficient to satisfy such requirements.

(d) A telephone corporation or cable television company shall not be obligated to establish a discount program under paragraph (a) of this subdivision if the commission deems a current program already in place through such telephone corporation or cable television company satisfies the criteria established under this subdivision.

(e) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, a telephone corporation may require proof of eligibility from the primary named telephone service accountholder for the calendar year in which the discount is sought.

2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resident of the state who (i) is the primary named telephone service accountholder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

(b) A primary named telephone service accountholder shall provide the telephone corporation an authenticated copy of such accountholder's discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

§ 4. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 224-d to read as follows:

§ 224-d. Cable discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a telephone corporation, as defined in subdivision seventeen of section two of this chapter, and a cable television company, as defined in section two hundred twelve of this article, that provides cable service to customers in New York, to establish a discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on cable bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a telephone corporation or cable television company to customers.

(b) A telephone corporation or cable television company which offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation or cable television company. The availability and amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the website of such telephone corporation or cable television company.

(c) Participation in the federal government's Lifeline or Affordable Connectivity program, or any successor program the commission shall deem sufficient, shall satisfy the telephone corporation's or cable television company's obligation to establish a discount program under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, unless the commission deems it insufficient to satisfy such requirements.

(d) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, a telephone corporation or cable television company may require proof of eligibility from the primary named cable service accountholder for the calendar year in which the discount is sought.

2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resident of the state who (i) is the primary named cable service accountholder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) received any honorable or general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

(b) A primary named cable service accountholder shall provide the telephone corporation or the cable television company an authenticated copy of such accountholder's discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

§ 5. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.